

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Canceled).

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A transfer fixing apparatus, comprising:

an intermediate transfer member having an outer surface onto which a toner image is transferred;

a transfer fixing member having an outer surface onto which said toner image is transferred by said intermediate transfer member;

a heating member configured to heat said toner image on the outer surface of said transfer fixing member; and

an opposite member formed opposite said transfer fixing member, wherein a nip is formed between said transfer fixing member and said opposite member, said toner image being fixed onto a record medium while passing through said nip;

wherein said transfer fixing member is separated by a space from said intermediate transfer member by a thickness of said toner image such that the intermediate transfer member and transfer fixing member do not contact each other in an area without toner.

Claims 3-4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A transfer fixing apparatus comprising:

an intermediate transfer member having an outer surface onto which a toner image is transferred;

a transfer fixing member having an outer surface onto which said toner image is transferred by said intermediate transfer member;

a heating member configured to heat said toner image on the outer surface of said transfer fixing member;

an opposite member formed opposite said transfer fixing member, wherein a nip is formed between said transfer fixing member and said opposite member, said toner image being fixed on a record medium when passing through said nip; and

a distance changing member configured to change a distance or contacting pressure between said intermediate transfer member and said transfer fixing member,

wherein said distance changing member is driven except while said toner image is being transferred from said intermediate transfer member to said transfer fixing member.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): A transfer fixing apparatus comprising:

an intermediate transfer member having an outer surface onto which a toner image is transferred;

a transfer fixing member having an outer surface onto which said toner image is transferred by said intermediate transfer member;

a heating member configured to heat said toner image on the outer surface of said transfer fixing member;

an opposite member formed opposite said transfer fixing member, wherein a nip is formed between said transfer fixing member and said opposite member, said toner image being fixed on a record medium when passing through said nip; and

a distance changing member configured to change a distance or contacting pressure between said intermediate transfer member and said transfer fixing member,

wherein said distance changing member is driven while said toner image is not being transferred from said intermediate transfer member onto said transfer fixing member when said intermediate transfer member and said transfer fixing member are driven.

Claims 7-48 (Canceled).